**Elisa:** Good afternoon this is Elisa Matson for the National Park Service. Today is the 16th of September, 1994 and I'm in the home of Mrs. Eve Borofsky in California. We're here in Laguna Hills. Mrs. Borofsky came from Romania in 1923 when she was 6 years old.

**Eva:** Yes.

**Elisa:** Mrs. Borofsky, why don't you start by giving me your full name and your date of birth please?

**Eva:** I am Eva Borofsky and I was born February 28th, 1917.

**Elisa:** What is your maiden name?

**Eva:**  Glazer, G-L-A-Z-E-R.

**Elisa:** What can you tell me about the town that you came from? Can you tell me what it looked like?

**Eva:** All I can say is that we lived in a very small house and I don't remember anything about the town and the floors were made of earth and we had a wood stove and I remember my mother having to go outside to chop the wood so that we can keep warm.

At the time I was born my father was in the army and my mother told me that they had to get him to come home because she was going to have the baby.

**Elisa:** What did people do for a living in this town? What was the major industry?

**Eva:** My father was electrician of some kind. He worked with people making fixtures I think.

**Elisa:** What did your father look like? Can you describe him?

**Evan:** I have a picture.

**Elisa:** Tell me what he looks like.

**Eva:** He was a short man, small features like myself. He's a very [inaudible 00:02:17] person, he had a hobby of singing for the Jewish holidays at the temple. He organized the choir and he sang for the most of my life that I could remember and he used to practice with these young boys.

He would meet them on the street and ask them to give him the tone of do-re-mi and when he thought they were qualified, he would bring them home and teach them the songs and they would practice in our house in a hundred degrees temperature but this was when we were in America and that’s all I can say about him.

**Elisa:** Is there a story that you remember being a young child with your father?

**Eva:** Yes.

**Elisa:** Tell me.

**Eva:** When my father was practicing with these young boys, he met a young boy and brought him into the house to practice and we were always there because he took one part of the house and this one boy seemed to like me and he would follow me all over but I didn't like him. He was a very heavy young boy and he was red faced and he turned out to be an opera singer this young boy. So this is a good memory that I have of my father bringing us up.

**Elisa:** How about your mother? What can you tell me about her, what did she look like?

**Eva:** She looked like me, I mean I looked like her and she worked very hard, she was an excellent cook. Romanian people make very good food.

**Elisa:** Can you tell me some of the things she used to make?

**Eva:** She would make [unclear 00:04:06] which was like a time, she would make all kinds of cake, she would make sponge cake and she would make very good soup and chicken and all the delicacies that she knew in America. I make stuffed cabbage like she made.

**Elisa:** Is there a story you remember about your mother growing up?

**Eva:** Yes, my mother since we came here we went to school and she always liked to speak English. She learned it from us but she spoke it very [inaudible 00:04:44], Jewish accent and then it came a time when she wanted to become a citizen and we practiced with her, we were three girls, two younger sisters and we practiced with her and we worked very hard and she worked very hard and finally the day came and we took her down to New York and she became a citizen.

She was very very happy and her life at home, we had five children and four us came from Europe and then there was my younger sister was born here. I was a poor existence but we all got along very well.

**Elisa:** Can you tell me your brothers and sisters, their names and a little about them?

**Eva:** Alright, here I am. My brother Avy was the eldest, he was born July 6th, 1912. He was a short chubby man and he too worked very hard to keep us in food and in clothing. At the age of 10 and 12 he had to go to work, so he worked very hard.

And then a brother Harry was born August 31st, 1914 and he too couldn't go to school. He went to public school but nothing further. Then my sister Minnie, January 26th, 1920 and then my sister Shirley was born in America August 10th, 1925. We were very close family and to this day we all keep in touch.

**Elisa:** It seems we have some loud traffic in the background, for those listening today.

**Eva:** Oh yeah but you can't help it. We have quite a large family and I have two daughters. My eldest brother had two sons, my brother Harry had three children, my sister Minnie had three and my sister Shirley has two. There all married and have grandchildren.

**Elisa:** Can you remember your grandparents?

**Eva:** Not the one in Europe, we were very young when we came here. We came here and my father had a mother and my father left Europe when he was young, he left his mother and father there and we were young. We came there's a grandmother and step grandfather.

**Elisa:** What were their names?'

**Eva:** I don’t' remember their names and we used to visit them often, my father's family. My mother didn't have much of a family here, my father had a big family and they all visited with us and we were always together and my grandmother at a time was sickish, she had a stroke and I remember going to the nursing home and helping her and everybody was always around her. Very lovely lady.

**Elisa:** What can you tell me about religious life and the holidays that you celebrated when you were [inaudible 00:07:57]?

**Eva:** I was very young, I can't say that. I was very young and I don't remember that but I do remember coming here to America, my parents were religious- orthodox religious and he used to sing the holidays, so we also had Jew holidays celebration and we were brought up that way and to this day we do carry it.

**Elisa:** Why don't you tell me about coming to this country? Coming to America, who decided to come to America? Why did you come to America? Who decided?

**Eva:** Well, my father decided. See my father came here first and he stayed here and then he decided that he wanted his family, so he sent for us. My father sent for us and I do remember going on this large boat, huge boat. We were four of us and my mom and I remember that we were not in steerage, that I found out when I went to Ellis Island.

**Elisa:** Do you know the name of the ship that you came on?

**Eva:** The Amsterdam and when I went to Ellis Island and I saw the path that we were going through and the way that people from steerage came and the others I realized that we were not in steerage, we were probably on one of the decks.

**Elisa:** Second class.

**Eva:** Whatever, yes second class and we had very nice time there, we were not sick and I do remember the man that brought their instruments along would play their instruments there and it was a happy time and I imagined the food was good, nobody complained. We didn't complain.

**Elisa:** Do you remember any of the food that you ate on the ship?

**Eva:** Well we did have herring and we did have soup and what they call the Jewish [unclear 00:10:03] and the immigrants brought food from Europe.

**Elisa:** Do you remember bringing any food with you?

**Eva:** I don't remember but my mother did.

**Elisa:** Do you remember anything that you took with you and you wanted to take [inaudible 00:10:13]?

**Eva:** I really don't, I don't remember but I did remember the ship that we were on and when we came to America we got off at Ellis Island.

**Elisa:** Well, a little more about the ship, how long do you think it took you to get to Ellis Island?

**Eva:** I think it took us about two weeks.

**Elisa:** Do you remember where you slept on the boat? What was that like?

**Eva:** Well, we slept on beds, I'm thinking my sister and I slept in one bed and my brothers slept in another and my mother slept. We had a room and we each doubled up.

**Elisa:** Do you remember any storms at sea?

**Eva:** No, it was a very pleasant voyage even though I wouldn't remember it directly and we never heard about it when we came to America. There was a cousin of mine, his name was Nathan [unclear 00:11:12], we were very close and he came on this voyage with us and he came to meet his family in America and then he brought his real family with him but we were very close and he was very happy to be with us.

**Elisa:** Tell me about landing, coming to Ellis Island.

**Eva:** Okay that I remember. I remember having to go into a large room, we all went to a very large room and we were examined, we had long braids, my sister and I had long black braids and they took those braids apart and examined us to see if there were any lice I guess and examined our eyes and we were all fine. My mother took very good care of us in that respect and my brothers were fine, we were all fine.

**Elisa:** So how long would you say you were at Ellis Island?

**Eva:** I think we were there for two days, I think until my father came to pick us up with family. They must have had a car at the time but it was pleasant, we didn't have any problems compared to the things I heard in Ellis Island we were really well off.

**Elisa:** Do you remember having lunch or dinner in Ellis Island?

**Eva:** Well, I remember them giving us fruit when we got there.

**Elisa:** What did they give you?

**Eva:** They gave us bananas and oranges and my eldest brother Av took a bite of the banana but he didn't peel it and he ate it straight through and he never ate a banana for the rest of his life. We probably were told or done for us, they opened that for us. So that’s very strong in our mind because we always mention that and everything seemed to be alright, we didn't have any problems.

**Elisa:** Do you remember [inaudible00:13:12] that side of Ellis Island?

**Eva:** No.

**Elisa:** Exploring.

**Eva:** No, we just stuck together. Probably from what I heard there were many people that came and it was very crowded.

**Elisa:** Where did you sleep?

**Eva:** When we came?

**Elisa:** Ellis Island.

**Eva:** Oh, we went into a room, they went to a room and we all slept in one room again till the following day.

**Elisa:** Who came to pick you up?

**Eva:** My father and his relatives. He was an uncle of ours, my father's brother.

**Elisa:** Remember his name?

**Eva:** His name was Benny Jaffy, he came and he picked us up then he took us to an apartment that we had on 2nd Avenue, my father had already rented an apartment and he took us to this apartment and it was on the 4th floor.

**Elisa:** What did it look like, do you remember?

**Eva:** It was a rail road apartment, they called it rail road. It was three rooms, bedrooms and I think we lived there for two year. It was upstairs on the fourth floor and it was a street on 2nd avenue where mostly Jewish people lived.

**Elisa:** So your neighborhood was primarily Jewish immigrants?

**Eva:** Jewish immigrants because most of the people spoke Jewish.

**Elisa:** Did you speak any English when you came?

**Eva:** No, I didn't speak any English.

**Elisa:** Anyone in your family speak English, your father?

**Eva:** No, my father spoke very little English because he was working. He was working and learning but he learnt, he didn't go to school but he learnt the language pretty well from the people who surrounded him.

**Elisa:** Do you remember learning English?

**Eva:** Yes, I do. We went to school, I came into a classroom and we didn't know the language but we just sat there and we listened because there were a lot of immigrants and they probably and I don't recall, maybe there were people speaking Jewish- spoke to us, the teachers maybe, they had teachers and we just picked it up, my brothers and myself.

**Elisa:** [inaudible 00:15:30].

**Eva:** Oh yeah, on the streets and in school. My brothers, my youngest sister didn't come yet. I remember the first time we had to take her to school it was snowing and I was the older of the two of the girls and I was chosen and I already knew what to do. She fell on the snow and she did not want to get up to go to school [laughter], I had to take her home, I remember that very distinctly.

**Elisa:** [inaudible 00:15:56] your best friend in school or meeting other children.

**Eva:** Well, we met a lot of children and my subjects were- I don't remember that and just learning it was very difficult but we caught on quickly and we'd come home and my mother would ask us what we did and she used to learn the language from us but we spoke Yiddish at home but we spoke a lot of English, mostly English.

I met some very close friends at the time but you know as you get older you don't remember these people, you don't see them because after two years we moved up to the Bronx which was a step up and there I met some very nice friends.

**Elisa:** What was your father doing at the time?

**Eva:** He worked for a relative of his who was making fixtures. He knew the [crosstalk 00:16:50] and neck of doing it and he had a relative who had a factory and this is what he did, he worked fixtures making.

**Elisa:** Why don't you describe a holiday for me in your house in America?

**Eva:** Alright, now this is like the holiday we just went through [unclear 00:17:09], this holiday is the end of an old year and a beginning of a new year for the Jewish people and because we were so very religious, the night before the holiday, we ate our regular meal, we lit the candles. Mum lit the candles and we could not- forbidden the radio. It was forbidden, this is we weren't allowed to use electricity, we just had to concentrate on the holiday and then the next day we all went to temple.

The temples in the Bronx were very close to the people’s homes so you would walk because on this holiday you couldn't even ride on anything, so you had to walk and there was a temple right nearby and our parents were in this temple and we would go in and out and play with our friends on the outside. That was a very joyous day and the next day was the [unclear 00:18:09], the night before we could eat our dinner and the lights were out.

**Elisa:** What would you have for dinner [inaudible 00:18:21]?

**Eva:** We had soup and chicken.

**Elisa:** What kind of soup?

**Eva:** Chicken soup and we had fish. My mother chopped fish, my mother would buy fresh fish [unclear 00:18:37], large fish and before the holiday this fish was swimming in our bath tub and to this day I don't know where we took a bath but we were clean people and when she had to cook she killed that fish herself and she cooked it and chopped and made [unclear 00:19:01] fish.

**Elisa:** How would you make it? Did you know? Can you tell about it? Give me the recipe.

**Eva:** Yes, okay. Well, you can buy the fish today in the stores and they will grind it for you- you want me to close the windows and the doors?

**Elisa:** Why don't we stop the tape just for a second?

**Eva:** Okay, let me do that.

**Elisa:** Okay we're back with Mrs. Borofsky, quite a little noise but we have an air conditioner going so you'll hear that noise in the background. Mrs. Borofsky, you were telling us how to make a [unclear] fish.

**Eva:** Well, you buy the fish, you buy [unclear 00:19:42] and white fish at the fish stores for the holidays they will grind it for you and when you take it home.

**Elisa:** This is before it’s cooked?

**Eva:** Yes, when its raw, you take it home and you add eggs, onions and you mix it up with your spices, whatever spices, salt and pepper you then mix it up and there's one ingredient you can put in there it’s called Matzo meal. It’s like a bread crumb and that makes it hard, enough to make a meatball, like a fish ball.

So you make fish balls out of that and you put it into two quart pot of water, boiling water and you add carrots and onions into the water, that cooks with the fish and that should cook for about two to three hours before it’s done and when it’s done, it’s delicious and you serve that with horseradish and [unclear 00:20:52], the egg bread, Jewish egg bread twist and that’s the meal.

You can add salad with it, you can add tomatoes, you can add anything you want with that and that’s the traditional holiday fish for [unclear 00:21:06].

**Elisa:** So that what you be your meal the night before [crosstalk 00:21:12]?

**Eva:** That and you eat chicken soup with they call it [unclear 00:21:16], you put into the soup.

**Elisa:** What is that?

**Eva:** It’s a little ball of dough that you either make by yourself, you mix up ingredients and you make it by yourself, you mix up Matzo meal and eggs salt and pepper and it becomes a little heavier and you also make and that you drop into your boiling chicken soup, that cooks in the soup and it becomes [unclear 00:21:41].

You have that with your meal, with your chicken, your roast chicken or boiled chicken and potatoes and then you have a desert. The desert is cooked fruit, peaches and pears and prunes and carrots in it and with some syrup with water and sugar and stuff and that is your desert.

That’s the holiday meal, we also we make a brisket, which you buy in the butcher and you cook that for two days which I've done recently and potatoes and that’s the meat of the meal. That’s the holiday meal.

**Elisa:** Now, describe what was yesterday, the holiday? What would you do during that day [inaudible 00:22:37] tradition in your family?

**Eva:** I have a daughter that lives here in California, she lives in [unclear 00:22:42] and we went the night before to the temple and we had the services there. We ate first and then we went and there was lovely services there. There's a rabbi, there's a canter and they had 24 people in a choir.

This is the kind of choir that my father used to lead [unclear 00:23:09] and we were always very proud of him and every year I just picture him doing this, it’s just wonderful and we sat in the temple for about three hours and was a wonderful services, music, singing and prayers and then yesterday morning my daughter picked us up and we went to services again and that was for about three hours, same type of thing. Praying, singing and then in the afternoon there's a service for people that passed away.

So you say your [unclear 00:23:53] which is a prayer for the people that have passed on and you think about them and then most people fast the whole day for this holiday. It’s a day of fast and a day of remembering and then when the holiday is over they stay the whole day here about 7 O'clock when the sun goes down you go home and you eat but you have to eat very light food because you fasted.

So they generally have bagels and locks and fish, the [unclear 00:24:29] fish and sour cream. Whatever you want to put into a fruit and coffee and cake. This is will give you a good feeling after a day of fast and that’s the end of the [unclear 00:24:44] holiday.

**Elisa:** That’s a very good description of the holidays here. Okay, so you moved to New York and then from there you moved to the Bronx next [inaudible 00:24:57]. Can you tell me what your house was like when you were living in the Bronx on your apartment?

**Eva:** We lived in a four roomed apartment, they had three bedrooms, the kitchen and a dining room and we all doubled up, sleeping together in one bed because sometimes we had relatives that came from Europe and they would visit us and they had to stay with us because we were their relatives.

Everybody did that, my mother being a good cook, would cook for these relatives, she had like a little boarding house which helped with the money for the family but this relatives were wonderful people, they took care of us if we needed clothing and the depression came on, they were there during the depression.